

# **SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

## **Canton School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-2007**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** March 13 and 14, 2007

**Date of Report:** March 29, 2007

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

**Promising Practice** The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

**Meets Requirements** The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

**Needs Improvement** The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.

**Out of Compliance** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.

**Not applicable** In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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## **Principle 1 – General Supervision**

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary** **Data Sources used:**

Canton Comprehensive Plan

State Table A, B, C, D, and H  
Child find announcement  
Teacher surveys  
Parent surveys  
Quarterly reports from staff  
Student file reviews  
Child count information  
Professional Development Data  
Needs assessments  
Staff meeting agendas

**Promising Practice:**

The Canton preschool screening involves the local daycares to provide information and resources to families. Each participating daycare/ preschool has a booth to present information to families.

**Meets Requirements:**

The Canton District has been involved in the School Improvement process to improve the students' performance. The individual student's IEP teams decide what method of assessment is best for each student.

Based upon the suspension and expulsion data (table C) the district has not placed a student in an alternative educational setting from 1999 through 2006.

The district comprehensive plan has established procedures for the employment of special education personnel who have the special education endorsements as required in state rules, including child evaluators.

Training on Oct. 4 and 5, 2005, was provided for paraprofessionals on Academic and Behavioral Strategies for Special Populations. Nov 2, 2005 training was provided CCHS Behavior Training overview and watch Richard Lavoy behavior training video. Reviewed the crisis management plan. August 19, 2005, in-service training discussed expectations, evaluations, school improvement status, sped resources, classroom rules and expectations (lesson plans/behavior management, communication, confidentiality). Three paraprofessionals attended Working with Challenging Students on Feb. 20, 2006. STEP Academy was also offered for them to attend in July 24-28, 2006. Para Reading-A Training Guide for Tutors was offered to those who wanted to attend on June 7-8, 2006. District in-service behavior training throughout the 2005-2006 school years.

District staff has completed in-service training needs assessments provided by Canton Special Education Director for the past 5 plus years. Results were tabulated and provided to district administrators in a written document.

Based upon priority needs identified on the in-service training needs assessments, all district staff were scheduled to attend an in-service on the roles and responsibilities of the regular educator and classroom modification through attendance center staff meetings.

30 out of 57 teacher surveys indicated they have input into the identification of staff development needs and planning of activities related to students with disabilities, 18 out of 57 teachers disagreed, and 6 out of 57 teachers indicated they did not know.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice:**

The sixth grade inclusion program is a team teaching effort between a general education teacher and the resource room staff. When observed this was a wonderful program for all students.

The Pre-K program is a program for students who the district feels will not succeed in kindergarten. The students attend classes in the school for half a day, and then the school provides day care for the students the other half of the day.

Community participation with retired teachers being volunteers for testing and helping students is a promising practice. The parent organization for the Canton School District is very active. All teachers at the elementary level are trained in Guided reading. Professional Development for teachers is outstanding. Teachers are allowed a stipend to use for professional growth. They are encouraged to attend trainings.

Canton School District has a before and after school program and the summer program for students.

### **Meets requirements:**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas meeting requirements identified by the steering committee for Principle 1 General Supervision.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data Sources Used:**

Surveys  
State Table I and C  
B-3 Case manager report  
File Reviews  
IDEA Application

### **Meets Requirements:**

The annual IDEA application for fund reflects: Funds are spent on all special education students' expenditures.

Parent surveys indicate 15 out of 22 of parents are satisfied with the education program and services provided to their children.

The district comprehensive plan policies support the provision of FAPE to students who reside in the district, group home, foster home or institutions by: providing special education services to all eligible students who are residents of the Canton School District in the least restrictive environment as determined by the team.

There are 9 students placed outside the school district.

From 2000 to the present date, 0 students with disabilities have been suspended for more than 10 days or expelled.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets Requirements:**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas meeting requirements identified by the steering committee for Principle Two Free and Appropriate Public Education.

### **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

File reviews  
Surveys  
State Table A  
Referral tracking forms

#### **Meets Requirements:**

Parental consent for re-evaluation was obtained in 42 of 44 student files reviewed.

All tests listed on the prior notice/consent were administered in 79 out of 83 files reviewed.

In 1 of 84 files reviewed, tests were given that were not listed on the prior notice/consent for evaluation.

The prior notice document used by the district contains all required content.

The district evaluation team is comprised of 2 or more of the following: special educator, speech clinician, preschool teacher, general educator and administrator.

Areas to be evaluated are determined by a "team" of people including the referring person, special education teacher, parent, school psychologist and administrator. Evaluations were completed within 25 school days after receipt of signed consent in 77 of 84 files reviewed. Comprehensive evaluations were conducted before the provision of services. In the 1 file review a short-term evaluation was developed.

41 of 56 teachers indicated student assessment information was reflective of student progress and is valid and meaningful for planning student instruction.

Transition evaluations were conducted for 19 of 21 students prior to their turning age 16.

In 80 of 84 files reviewed, the child was assessed in all areas identified on the prior notice.

The district/agency has an ongoing child find process.

The district/agency has TAT/team meetings with 34 of 34 students being referred for special education assessments. Of the students that were referred for special education services, 22 were eligible and receive services.

An MDT report containing all required content was available in the files of 35 of 38 students with learning disabilities. Reevaluations were conducted at least every 3 years in 40 of 42 student files reviewed.

#### **Out of Compliance: Needs Assistance**

Parental input into evaluation process.

Parent input into the re-evaluation process was documented in 58 of 83 files reviewed.

#### **Validation Results:**

##### **Meets Requirements:**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that a prior notice is given to parents for evaluations. Transition evaluations are being completed. An MDT report is available for students in the area of specific learning disability.

##### **Out of Compliance: Needs Assistance**

The monitoring team agrees with Parental input into the evaluation/reevaluation process as identified by the steering committee.

**ARSD 24:05:25:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data.** As part of an initial evaluation, if appropriate, the individual education program team required by § 24:05:27:01.01 and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine whether the child has a disability, and determine whether the child needs special education and related services, as appropriate, shall:

(1) Review existing evaluation data on the child, including:

(a) Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child;

The Monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the Canton School District has not consistently documented parental input into the evaluation planning process.

### **Out of Compliance: Needs Assistance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:30:04 Prior notice and parent consent**

Informed parental consent must be obtained before conducting a first-time evaluation, reevaluation, and before initial placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services. Parental consent is not required before:

- (1) Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or reevaluation; or
- (2) Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all children unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all children.

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (7) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

The monitoring team found that transition evaluations were being completed, but there was no parent permission to administer the assessments. Evaluations are being administered without consent from parents, and evaluations listed on the prior notice are not being given. Functional evaluations were not found in all evaluations and lacked the skill specific information needed to develop Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs) and goals.

Students 1 and 25 are reported as students with Other Health Impaired. Student 1 had only one score in the clinically significant range and that was only by one teacher. The other teacher had him at a 68 which is at-risk. Student 25 did not have any scores in the clinically significant range. Both IEPs stated behavior did not impede learning. Both students were under the OHI category for ADD/ADHD. The goals for both of these students were not developed for an educational program. PLAAFPs do not indicate skill areas affected by the disability.

Student 3 is reported as a student with Autism. The student does not meet the criteria for Autism. The evaluation in the file does not support the placement of Autism. The test results and report do not validate the areas checked on the MDT. There are no educational goals for this student. He gets less than an hour of services per week. The only area of concern on the PLAAFPs was slow process

time. Areas to be addressed are attention and speech. Speech scores were normal on the evaluations listed. Language scores were not complete. The student was reevaluated for autism on 10/6/05. The report states the strengths for this student includes: initiates interaction, asks questions, responds to verbal interaction of others, asks for help when needed and understands classroom rules. When asked to tell a story the student described a fishing trip with grandparents and a play date with a friend. The BASC-II showed no areas clinically significant. Childhood Autism rating scale indicated mild to moderate. There were no Aspergers evaluations completed.

Student 19 is reported as a student with Autism. The student does not meet the criteria for Autism. The team did not identify 6 characteristics required for eligibility. Five were checked. The report only validates 4 out of the 5 checked characteristics. Preoccupation was not found. PLAAFPS do not list any educational need.

On the BASC areas in the clinically significant range were: Hyperactivity, Depression, Atypicality, and Withdrawl. Areas addressed on the PLAAFPS page were reading, written expression and Math. The goals address classroom behaviors, social interaction, and pragmatic language. The PLAAFPS and goals are not aligned. Behaviors impede learning was checked no. The student does not receive pull out services. The IEP states an observer will come into the class to observe progress toward goals.

Student 23 is reported as a student with Autism. A Diagnosis on the three year evaluation was ODD and ADHD. A physician ruled out Bipolar Disorder and Pervasive Development Disorder. All goals relate to the behaviors. The student does not meet the criteria for Autism.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The agency makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data Sources Used:**

Surveys  
File reviews  
Comprehensive plan

### **Promising Practice:**

All records are kept in fireproof cabinets with lockable binders that contain individual tabs for special education records.

**Meets requirements:**

84 of 84 files reviewed showed that parental rights information is given to parents with every prior notice/consent sent and at every IEP team meeting. The district's request for consent document contains all required information. The definition of consent is included on the consent for use by the district.

The comprehensive plan procedures address the appointment of surrogate parents. These procedures meet regulatory requirements. A list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parent if needed is not available in the district at this time. The foster parent would typically be assigned as the surrogate parent if parental rights have been terminated.

The district has had 0 complaints filed with the special education program in the past several years.

**Validation Results****Meets requirements:**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas meeting requirements identified by the steering committee for Principle Four Procedural Safeguards. The team was not able to validate records being kept in a fireproof cabinet as a promising practice.

**Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary****Data Sources Used:**

Surveys  
File Reviews  
B-3 Case manager report

**Meets Requirements:**

Prior notice used by the district contains all of the required information above.

In 72 of 84 student files, the IEP team included the required members. (7 of the 12 missing members were students of transition age, but their preferences were documented.) In 7 of 22 files of students age 16 or older, the student attended their IEP meeting. All students are invited at transition age. Ten students surveyed stated they were invited to their IEP meetings, 21 indicated they were not invited and 28 students did not know or it was not applicable. In 3 of 18 student files



reviewed, representatives from other agencies were invited and participated in the IEP meetings for students of transition age.

In 5 out of 19 files reviewed, representatives did not attend but the district obtained their participation.

Transition services meet all requirements.

In 67 of 71 student files reviewed, IEPs were reviewed annually. Some of the file reviews did not have an annual meeting due to student moving etc. In 81 of 83 student files reviewed, IEP meetings were held within 30 calendar days of receipt of the evaluation results.

The present levels of performance in 76 of 84 files reviewed contained specific skills in the student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. Present levels were present but one component may have been missing (example: PLOP back to gen. curriculum, parent input)

18 of 52 student's surveys indicated if the school work was too hard, teachers changed it to make it easier.

Related services necessary to benefit from special education was documented in 82 of 82 files reviewed.

The need for extended school year was considered in 80 of 84 IEPs reviewed.

Seventy nine of 84 IEPs reviewed contained a specific description of special education and related services to be provided (specific service, amount of service, location).

In 67 of 71 files reviewed the students IEPs were reviewed annually, on or before the date of the previous IEP.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets Requirements:**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that transition services are completed for all students 16 and older. Extended School Year services are considered for all students.

#### **Needs Assistance: (Out of Compliance)**

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP) Present level of academic achievement and functional performance and annual goals**

A student's IEP must contain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process.

**ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.** Each student's individualized education program shall include:

(1) A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including:

(2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:

The monitoring team found student files lacked the required content in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFPs including specific skill area(s) affected by the student's disability, to include strengths and needs, along with how the disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum and parent input. File reviews indicated functional assessments are not being completed on every student to acquire the skill-based information to develop present levels of performance and academic functional performance for students eligible for special education services. Annual goals did not consistently specify skills the student could reasonably accomplish within a 12 month period. For example, "Will continue to improve his communication skills by starting conversations and maintaining eye contact with people." "Use appropriate pragmatic language skills in 4 of 5 opportunities on 3 consecutive days." "Will write a paragraph that has a beginning, middle and end." "Will add and subtract fractions with unlike decimals."

**ARSD 24:05:27:01.02 Development, review and revision of the IEP- Consideration of Special Factors**

In developing, reviewing, and revising each student's IEP, the team shall consider the strengths of the students and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the students as appropriate, and the results of the student's performance on any general state or district-wide assessment program. The individualized education program team also shall: In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, if appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, and supports, to address the behavior.

In several student files reviewed, behavioral assessment and/or present levels of academic achievement and functional performance contained information regarding the impact of student behavior on educational performance. However, in developing the IEPs for these students, the team checked that behavior does not impede learning and did not address strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, to address the behaviors.

**Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

**Data Sources Used:**

B – Instructional Staff Information  
E – Enrollment Information  
F – Placement Alternatives  
G – Disabling Conditions  
I – Placement by Age  
J – Placement by Disabling Condition  
L – Complaints  
M – Hearings  
N – Monitoring

1. File reviews
2. Parent, Student, General educator surveys
3. General curriculum information
4. Age at placement
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training
7. Budget information

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the school district provides procedures for determining placement options using the continuum of alternative placements. LRE considerations are applied to all students' birth through twenty one.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under Principle Six Least Restrictive Environment.